

CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 24, 2021

The City Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 4:02 p.m. in the Executive Conference Room on the 24th day of June, 2021, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Hall, Nash, Peacock, Studley, and Chairman Holman

ABSENT: Councilmember Petrone

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember-elect Lauren Schueler, Ward Two
Ms. Brenda Hall, City Clerk
Mr. Jesse Hill, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Technician
Mr. Taylor Johnson, Public Transit Coordinator
Mr. Shawn O’Leary, Director of Public Works
Ms. Heather Poole, Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager
Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney
Lieutenant Teddy Wilson, Police Department
Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV

Item 1, being:

PUBLIC TRANSIT RIDERSHIP REPORT.

Mr. Taylor Johnson, Public Transit Coordinator, said because of federal regulations, masks, capacity restrictions, and social distancing are still being mandated on buses. He said all public transportation, i.e., buses, planes, trains, etc., have the same mandates throughout the nation.

Mr. Johnson said the fixed route service transported 14,952 passengers in May 2021, compared to 15,143 in April 2021. The daily average ridership was 598, an increase of 2.69%. There were 394 passengers with bicycles and 375 passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility devices transported in May.

The paratransit service transported 1,415 passengers in May 2021, compared to 1,512 in April 2021. Average daily ridership was 57, a decrease of 2.67%. For the month of May, the paratransit service had 0% trip requests denied due to capacity.

Saturday service began August 15, 2020, and totaled 1,584 in May 2021, a 32.77% increase over 1,193 for April 2021.

Item 1, continued:

Mr. Johnson highlighted transit activities and said Staff presented an update on the comprehensive evaluation of the existing transit service prepared by Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc., (Nelson/Nygaard), to the Community Planning and Transportation Committee (CPTC) on May 27th and to full Council at their June 15th Study Session. The study identified opportunities to improve transit service for the community and will be a strategic plan to optimize and expand transit over the next 20 years. The final draft of the Plan was approved by Council on June 22nd.

Mr. Johnson said Staff is preparing a grant application to the Federal Transit Authority Low or No-Emission Vehicle Program for one (1) battery powered electric bus and associated charger, which is a very competitive grant. He said Staff will continue to modernize and standardize the bus fleet using funds available to the transit program. He said Council approved the purchase of the City's first battery powered electric bus on May 25th and delivery is anticipated to take 12 to 15 months. He said approximately 50% of the vehicle purchase price will be reimbursed through a grant received from the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality through the Volkswagen Settlement Fund.

Mr. Johnson said progress continues to be made on the construction of the new Transit Maintenance and Operation Facility on North Base and commended Fleet Maintenance Division Staff for continuing to ensure the transit fleet is in operational condition despite the age of the vehicles (19 out of 27 buses have met their useful life). This maintenance includes mechanical maintenance as well as fueling, cleaning, and sanitizing the buses each night at the conclusion of service.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated June 24, 2021, from Taylor Johnson, Public Transit Coordinator, through Shawn O'Leary, P.E., CFM, Director of Public Works, to Council Community Planning and Transportation Committee
2. Public Transportation Monthly Report for May 2021

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Item 2, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING PUBLIC SAFETY THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN.

Lieutenant Teddy Wilson, Norman Police Department, quoted a sentence by Timothy Crowe that states, "The proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of the quality of life and enhanced profitability for business." He said Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior and incorporates principles from Planning, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Law Enforcement, and Engineers. The CPTED is comprised of four key elements that include surveillance; access control; territoriality; activity support; maintenance; and crime prevention components.

Item 2, continued:

Lt. Wilson said there are three types of surveillance that include:

- Natural Surveillance – naturally occurring, open and well lighted areas, typically free of cost (residents, management, neighbors, etc.);
- Mechanical Surveillance – employs the use of cameras, mirrors and other equipment that allows an individual to monitor a remote area (cost of equipment and maintenance fees); and
- Organized Surveillance – includes security patrols and other people organized to watch targeted area (resident patrols, security patrols, or off-duty police officers).

Types of access control include:

- Natural/Environmental – involves the use of the environment (medium-height bushes, dirt berms, design walking paths and sidewalks);
- Mechanical – includes the use of security gates, which have proven very effective at reducing auto thefts and burglaries (security doors and gates, deadbolts, window locks); and
- Organized – entails the use of security or courtesy patrol to control who enters the property (security guards).

Lt. Wilson said Territoriality is a psychological impression that people get when they look at the property and whether or not there is defensible space that can include a public street, semi-public cul-de-sac, semi-private sidewalk, or private unit. He said posting signs, such as No Trespassing or No Soliciting, establishes the area as defensible space. Also if the property is well maintained, it shows that management cares for and will defend the property against crime. Territorial reinforcement is where private property begins and public property ends fostering a sense of ownership. He said maintenance is an important component of all these principles.

Activity Support involves the appropriate use of recreational facilities and common areas, i.e., fill the area with legitimate users so the abusers will leave. Lt. Wilson said the three D's of CPTED are 1) Designation – what is the intended use of space/property? 2) Definition – is it clear who owns the space and what activities are allowed (is there a rules sign?), and 3) Design – does the physical environment support the intended use?

Another aspect of CPTED is lighting because lighting is a powerful tool that management and residents can use to control and reduce the “fear” and opportunity of crime. Lt. Wilson said the color and direction of light is important as well, but unless there is a formal or informal surveillance of an area, lighting may not always prevent crime and good lighting without surveillance may actually encourage criminal activity in some cases.

Lt. Wilson said small things can make a huge difference, such as replacing strike plate and deadbolt screws with three-inch screws to better secure the door to doorframe making it difficult to kick in, keeping bushes near doors and windows trimmed to three feet so no one can hide behind them, but if that is not possible, trim the bottom of the bush up so you can see feet behind them, keeping trees trimmed to seven feet from ground, and installing fences to reinforce property boundaries.

Item 2, continued:

Lt. Wilson said Norman CPTED elements draw “eyes to the street” and some elements already in place include Second Friday Art Walk public art, bike rack sculptures, murals, and festivals. He said these things provide security (many eyes on the street) as well as attracting people to Norman.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, “Norman Police Department Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)”

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Item 3, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT REQUIREMENTS FOR TAXI CABS.

Chairman Holman said due to a constituent request he asked for an update from Staff on what the City can legally do regarding requiring taxi companies to provide a handicap accessible vehicle within their fleet.

Ms. Kathryn Walker, City Attorney, said under the federal law for Transportation Services for Individuals with Disabilities (Americans with Disabilities Act – ADA), providers of a taxi service are not required to purchase or lease accessible automobiles; when a provider of a taxi service purchases or leases a vehicle other than an automobile, the vehicle is required to have a number of accessible vehicles in its fleet; a provider of a taxi service is not required to purchase vehicles other than automobiles in order to have a number of accessible vehicles in its fleet; and private entities providing taxi service shall not discriminate against individuals with disabilities by actions including, but not limited to, refusing to provide service to individuals with disabilities who can use taxi vehicles, refusing to assist with towing of mobility devices, and charging higher fares or fees for carrying individuals with disabilities and their equipment than are charged to other persons.

Ms. Walker said a fixed route system or demand responsive system, when viewed in its entirety, is deemed to provide equivalent service if the service is available to individual with disabilities, including those using wheelchairs, if provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the individual and is equivalent to the service provided to other individuals with respect to the following service characteristics: schedules; fares; hours/days of service; availability of information; reservations capability; constraints on capacity or service availability; and restriction priorities based on trip purpose. The City of Norman provides a public transit system that includes paratransit service for riders with disabilities who cannot use the fixed route system, which is equivalent service under federal law.

Ms. Walker said State requirements grant the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) exclusive jurisdiction over the regulation of ride sharing companies, such as Uber and Lyft. Such companies must adopt a policy of non-discrimination, must require drivers to comply with laws related to service animals, and cannot charge more to provide services to person with physical

Item 3, continued:

disabilities. These companies must provide passengers an opportunity to indicate whether they need a wheelchair accessible vehicle and if a provider cannot arrange a wheelchair accessible prearranged ride, they must direct the passenger to an alternate provider of accessible service, if available.

The City of Norman requires operators and drivers of taxicabs, motorbuses, and limo services to obtain a license from the City, except companies who hold an OCC license as an Intrastate Motor Carrier. Ms. Walker said the vehicles are subject to inspections by the City, must provide proof of insurance, and cannot discriminate. She said *if a company is receiving subsidies* from the City, State, or Federal government, at least one vehicle in the fleet must be accessible to all riders, Staff must have access to and be trained in the use of a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)/Teletype (TTY) System; and must receive ADA training. She said violations of the ordinance could result in forfeiture of the license and prosecution in Municipal Court is also an option with a fine of up to \$750 and/or 60 days in jail. She said taxicabs in Norman are not generally required to have accessible vehicles in their fleet because they do not receive operating subsidies; however, if a taxicab company purchases or leases a vehicle other than an automobile, it may be required to be accessible under federal law.

Councilmembers were interested in discussing contracting with a taxicab company or an Uber or Lyft driver for a minimum length of time (three years or more) and providing them with some type of grant or incentive (using federal or private funds) that would allow them to retro-fit a vehicle to be handicap accessible. Chairman Holman said this issue will be discussed further during the Council Retreat.

Items submitted for the record

1. Accessibility and Private Providers of Transportation Fact Sheet, Federal Law: Transportation Services for Individuals with Disabilities (ADA)
2. Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R) § 37.131. Service criteria for complimentary paratransit

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Item 4, being:

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS.

Councilmember Peacock said he would like to have a future discussion about addressing sidewalk gaps in Norman, especially Core Norman.

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The meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor